

nizable for all that. This conclusion is indeed the opinion of the Creeks themselves, as they told William Bartram,¹ nearly a century ago, that "the Natchez was a dialect of the Muscoulge," as he calls the Mäskoke. There is, further, no reason to doubt but that the great mass of the nation were of Mäskoke lineage. The only point in which they differed essentially from the tribes around them was in the despotic character of their rulers. Many other of the Chahta-Mäskoke tribes were nearly equally civilized. The Yasous, Coras, Oſtagoulas and Ouspie erected mounds and earthworks for their villages², as, indeed, did most of the Creek tribes; the so-called "Temple" and the perpetual fire kept therein, were customs common throughout the Mäskoke country³; the Nache celebrated the feast of new corn just as the Creeks did, and, according to Du Pratz's description, with very similar ceremonies; while the title "Great Sun" was so far from a strange or unusual metaphor to apply to a chief that, for instance, the Delawares conferred it on Col. Daniel Broadhead in 1781⁴.

The body of roots wholly dissimilar from any I have been able to find in the Chahta-Mäskoke dialects, embraces a number of important words, and makes up a sufficiently large percentage of the language to testify positively to a potent foreign influence. In what direction we are to look in order to find analogies for them, and thus, perhaps, throw light on the origin of the despotic government of the Nache and some of their peculiar customs, I shall not at present discuss.

AN ACOUSTIC PHENOMENON IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

(*Read at the Meeting of the Philosophical Society, Nov. 7th, 1873.*)

On the eighth day of August, 1873, a party of four, ascended Bald Mountain, one of the loftiest summits of the Wahsatch Range, bounding Salt Lake valley on the east. It rises nearly four thousand feet above the Mining Camp of Alta, and over twelve thousand above the level of the sea. The shady gulches of the mountains were still patched with snow, around which acres of wild flowers during this, their tardy spring, were blooming in lavish profusion.

As its name imports, vegetation nearly ceases some hundreds of feet from the top of the mountain, partly owing to its extreme elevation, and partly to its destitution of soil. Its top had withered into a more or less spherical form, and was shingled with disintegrated shale—(about

1 *Travels through North and South Carolina, etc.*, p. 463.

2 De La Harpe, *Annals of Louisiana*, p. 106.

3 Interesting particulars respecting these customs are given by William Bartram in a MS. in the possession of the Penna. Historical Society.

4 Heckewelder, *Narrative of the Mission of the United Brethren among the Delaware and Mohegan Indians*, p. 218.

the average size of bricks)—and was *very* sparsely interspersed with grass.

Whilst resting some two hundred feet from the summit, on the north-east flank (during a moderate breeze from the south-west) we were surprised by a loud roaring noise proceeding from the other side, precisely similar to that of an express train when crossing a bridge, or passing a rocky wall. It continued for the space of several seconds, exciting various surmises as to its character and cause. Prior to its occurrence not a sound disturbed the pulseless silence. All agreed that it resembled the rush of a railway train, a clap of thunder, or an avalanche of rocks down the mountain side. Hurrying forward to ascertain the facts, nothing whatever could be discerned to furnish a clue to them. The day moreover was perfectly clear,—not a cloud upon the horizon; and the theory of a clap of thunder was accordingly abandoned. It was suggested that the goblins, who in the days of Rip Van Winkle played nine-pins on the summits of the Kaatskills, might possibly have emigrated like the Mormons to this sequestered spot, and had been nearly surprised at their accustomed game. In a few moments more, however, the phenomenon occurred again, and in this instance to the abundant satisfaction of us all.

A petty whirlwind, such as dashes along our dusty roads in summer, flitted past within some twenty feet, accompanied by a similarly boisterous noise, although not so prodigious as in the first instance. Their identity, however, was unequivocal; for, bare as the mountain was, the wind was enabled to collect enough of dust to render its gyrations distinctly visible. This was followed by two or three others of like character during the half hour of our stay, but each apparently less noisy than the last. As the sun had just passed the meridian this fact might possibly account for their diminishing energy.

As the second was sweeping by, the writer—in order to measure the violence of its winds—rushed into its vortex. It was not traveling faster than spirited walk, and was about a yard in diameter. Its vertical current, however, was sufficient to invert the skirts of his frock-coat above his head, although its pockets were loaded with specimens of silver ore to the extent of at least one pound each. His hat required to be firmly secured, and although there was not force enough in the wind to disturb his equilibrium otherwise, its effect on the earth's surface developed a noise like that of a quick-moving empty cart over a stony pavement. The loudness of the clamor appeared to be in each case in exact proportion with the violence of the wind, and it is a notable and well established fact, that in destructive whirlwinds, such as tear up trees, the accompanying roar is that of the most appalling thunder.

Having in no instance heard of these phenomena, as occurring on the scale, and under the circumstances here mentioned, the writer deems it well to impart the facts for the due consideration of the curious.